

# ***The Electric Mercury***

**U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, February 2001**

For more on these and other important stories, see February 2001 printed issue of The Mercury.  
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.

## **Army Nurse Corps celebrates 100th anniversary**

Two-page package of historical photographs and highlights honors the Army Nurse Corps, which was established on Feb. 2, 1901, as a result of the outstanding performance of contract nurses during the Spanish-American War and its aftermath.

## **Thanks to nurses on anniversary**

The contribution of nurses to Army Medicine actually began long before the official establishment of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901, points out Army Surgeon General and MEDCOM Commander LTG James B. Peake in his monthly column. As volunteers or contract employees, nurses have been part of the AMEDD since the country began, sharing the hardships and often the dangers of the soldiers they cared for.

## **Policies put bite into dental care**

Active-duty and reserve-component soldiers and family members now have a dental plan with teeth, the Army Family Action Plan General Officer Steering Committee learned at its semiannual meeting. Three key changes: reserve-component families may participate in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) insurance plan; several oft-requested services have been added to TDP coverage; and DoD has reminded overseas commanders that retirees, civilian employees and their families are eligible for space-available dental care overseas and urged them to develop policies and marketing for those services. With a sidebar article summarizing the status of other critical AFAP issues.

## **Studies find no link between depleted uranium, illness**

Fifty years of studies and experience AMEDD have convinced Department of Defense officials there is minimal risk in using depleted uranium (DU) in munitions, says Bernard Rostker, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. He cites a 1999 RAND Corporation review of literature on DU and the even-more-radioactive natural uranium. The RAND study failed to find any plausible link between exposure to these substances and illness. See the report at <http://www.gulfink.osd.mil/library/randrep/du/cover.html>

Other important stories in the February *Mercury* include:

- By adapting Corporate Dental Application software for the Palm Pilot, the Fort Hood DENTAC enables dentists to enter patient-record information directly into its computer systems. This eliminates delays for clerical inputting of written notes.
- New clinical practice guideline for major depressive disorder is being tested at Tripler and Walter Reed Army Medical Centers and Fort Belvoir and Fort Knox MEDDACs.
- Retired COL Frank Novier and retired SGM Oscar R. Ramos-Rivera are the new Honorary Colonel and Honorary Sergeant Major of the AMEDD Regiment. They replace retired COL T. R. Byrne and retired SGM Julius Bennett.
- Seven present or retired AMEDD officers are honored by Army Region, American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine. Laureates for lifetime achievement are LTG Ronald Blanck, BG Michael Kussman and COL Yancy Phillips. Others honored are COL Ronald Cooper, Master Teacher Award; COL Stephen Gouge, Excellence in Operational Medicine Award; MAJ John Byrd, the COL William Crosby Superiority in Research Award; and MAJ Alice Pugh, the Moser Award.
- Run 200 miles? X-ray technician Joseph West, Fort Bragg DENTAC, was one of four to finish grueling “Double Moe” race in Ohio. He finished in just over 83 hours.
- AMEDD performers shine at Army Stars of Tomorrow contest. A doctor who sings barbershop with finger puppets, LTC George Patrin of Headquarters MEDCOM, wins overall championship. Top spot in the instrumental solo category goes to violinist PFC Uma Mishra, a medical laboratory specialist student at AMEDD Center and School.
- Photos show World War II nurse Eda Teague, British leader Winston Churchill’s grandson and namesake, President Franklin Roosevelt’s great-granddaughter Laura Roosevelt, and Eagle Scout Robie MacKichan in ceremony launching World War II Veterans Memorial; Womack Army Medical Center technician Chong James conducting esophageal manometry test on patient; new Army beret flash; and a team of Womack Army Medical Center pet-therapy dogs waiting to make their rounds cheering up patients.
- Chapter 6 in “Medics of the Coldest War” describes how U.N. forces recovered from Chinese intervention and drove the enemy back, how medics improved on the World War II died-of-wounds rate despite battle chaos and bitter weather; and how a bold AMEDD officer landed behind enemy lines to determine if plague might be a threat to our forces.
- A commentary by Fort Sill DENTAC Commander COL Alice L. O’K. Damarais elucidates leadership principles based on the example of Abraham Lincoln.

● Gradual change and recovering from relapses is secret to developing healthier lifestyle. A U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine gives practical tips.